

Join us on the second Thursday of every month for a series of "brown bag" seminars sponsored by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and the U.S. Department of Energy. Each seminar is held at NREL's Washington offices with a video-conference link to Golden, Colorado. Topics focus on new and innovative renewable energy and energy analysis strategies, models, and technologies.



Energy Analysis Seminar Series

A "brown bag" analytical seminar series

Electricity Requirements for a Digital Society

Walter S. Baer, Senior Policy Analyst
RAND

Thursday, June 12, 2003
Noon–1 p.m.

Increasing use of the Internet—and other information and communications technologies—(ICTs) marks a U.S. transition toward a "digital society," which may profoundly affect electricity supply, demand, and delivery. RAND developed four 20-year scenarios of ICT evolution (2001–2021) for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and assessed their implications for future U.S. electricity requirements. Increased power consumption by ICT equipment is the most direct and visible effect, but not necessarily the most important.

Baer will discuss how the effects that ICTs have on energy management, e-commerce, telework, and related trends will likely be much more consequential over time. Even large growth in the deployment and use of digital technologies will only modestly increase U.S. electricity use during the next two decades. The more pressing concern for an emerging digital society will be how to provide the higher-quality and more-reliable power that ICTs demand.

Walter S. Baer (B.S. Caltech, Ph.D. physics, University of Wisconsin) is senior policy analyst at RAND and professor of policy analysis at the RAND Graduate School. His research focuses on how changes in technology, markets, and regulation affect energy, information, and communications. He recently directed a project for the Department of Energy (DOE) exploring how information and communications technologies may influence future electricity requirements, as well as a study of governance in a changing marketplace for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. His former positions include director of RAND's energy program and Director of Advanced Technology at the Times Mirror Company. Baer has served on the EPRI Advisory Council, the Governor's Council on Information Technology for the State of California, and a recent National Research Council panel studying the evolution and future impacts of the Internet.



Walter S. Baer

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